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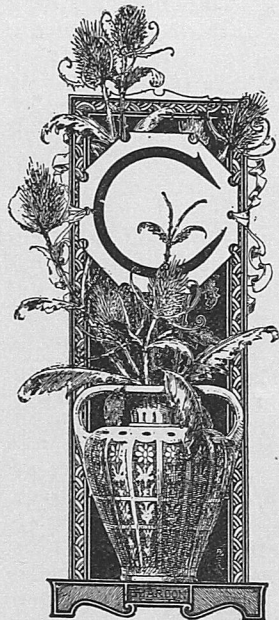
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BAMBOO AND RATTAN FURNITURE IN PARIS.

BY ADA CONE.



COUNTRY house furnishings are an important specialty in Paris, and nothing in Europe approaches the light, grace and airy beauty of some of the French chateau interiors. They can be matched only by the palaces of the Orient, and it is from the Orient that the inspirations for them is largely drawn. Japanese inlays, Chinese vases, heathen bronze gods, light artistic draperies move idly in the breeze, head screens make a music like running water, and a coquetry that is loved by the French,—all that speaks of light and color and coolness are there; one would say of some of them that they were the enchanted palaces told of in the Arabian Nights.

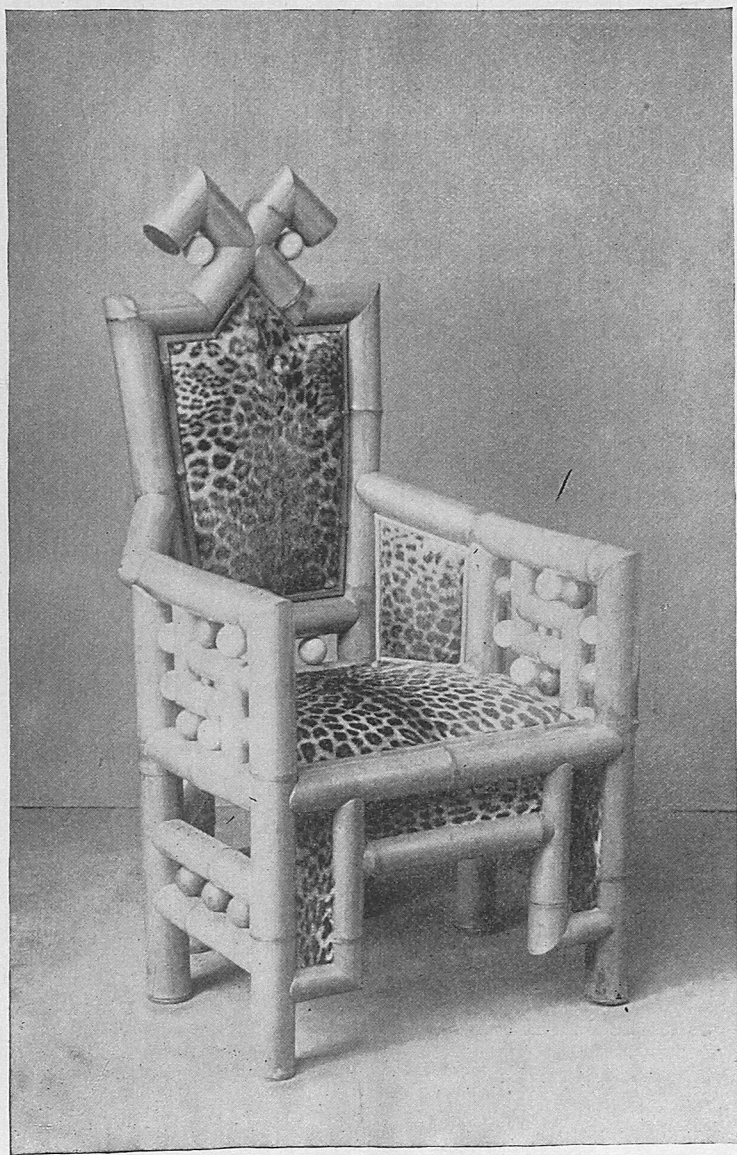
Eastern *motifs* are the great vogue for country interiors. There is in the present salon of the Champs de Mars, in the furniture exhibit,

ciently indicates the Eastern tendency of fashion, wherever formal manners are relaxed.

But the great bulk of French summer furniture is bamboo and rattan, which also come from the East, but only the mate-



FRENCH CHAIRS IN RATTAN. BY PERRET & FILS & VIBERT, PARIS. (Nos. 105 AND 106.)



GARDEN CHAIR IN BAMBOO. BY PERRET & FILS & VIBERT, PARIS. (No. 49.)

a set of Turkish pattern, the frames surmounted by horseshoe arches, carved with Arabic legends and upholstered in Turkish fabric. This furniture is made in Paris, but of imported materials, and exhibited in the salon as a French product, it suffi-

rients. It is made up in Paris, and the French furniture novelty of the summer for halls, piazzas and gardens is very heavy bamboo, the sticks being some five inches in diameter. These enormous sticks are said to require a hundred and fifty years to grow. I have seen these novelties and also some of the newest rattan designs at the house of Perret and Fils and Vibert, specialists in country house decoration, and these gentlemen have had the kindness to furnish some pictures to illustrate this article. This bamboo is in three different colors—white, red and black. The red bamboo is a rich brown and very beautiful. A large chair made of it, with seat and back of Zanzibar matting in colors, with mountings of little Japanese dragons in carved teak, seen at this house, was most artistic and satisfactory. The black bamboo also is beautiful. It is mottled black and yellow, and looks well as a framework for yellow matting and also for colored matting. Other chairs of large bamboo are upholstered with Japanese leather with stamped figures in colored bronzes; still others are upholstered with tiger skin.

Zanzibar matting combines very well with these great bamboo frames. It is used for table tops as well as for chairs, stretched over wood with exceedingly good effect.

Umbrella stands made in several sizes of bamboo combined have a row of short lengths of the larger bamboo ranged side by side like organ pipes to hold the umbrellas.

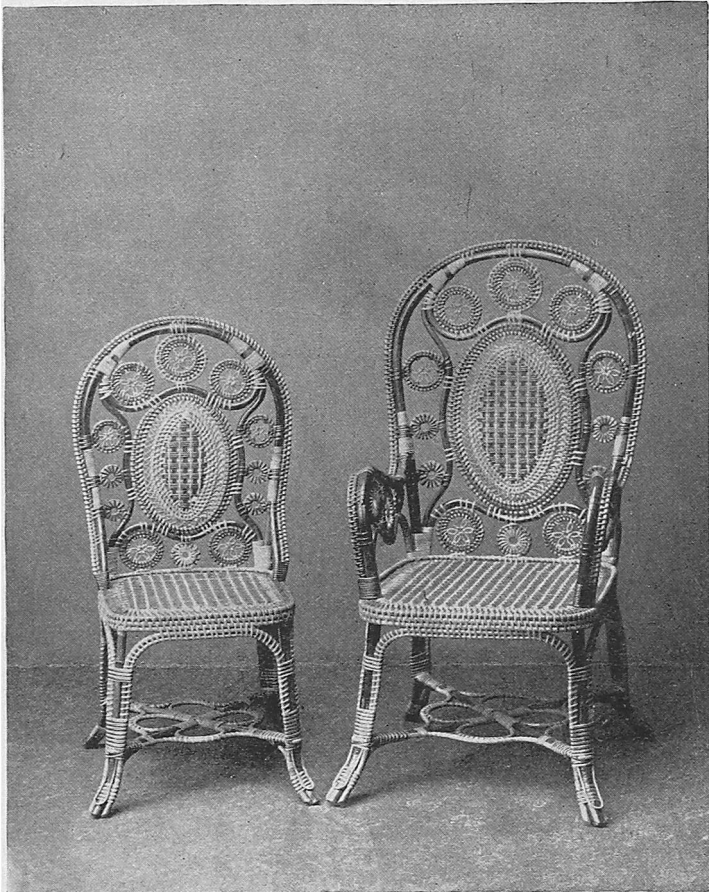
Among the very successful pieces are square and oblong seats, without backs, though sometimes with sides, after the Greek manner, very solidly made of the large cane, in a Greek fret pattern. These are a great artistic success. They have matting tops, and are completed by a cushion of Oriental silk. Nothing could be more satisfactory.

Hall lanterns of bamboo in octagonal form, with stained glasses, are particularly successful in the black wood; and bamboo bird cages formed like Chinese pagodas rest on stands made of delicate ladders of fine bamboo, as frail looking as lace.

In rattan designs there is a considerable variety in the forms and in the weaves. A very good style has a square

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

framework of bamboo strapped ornamentally on the angles with rattan, with very fine damask woven rattan stretched smoothly between. It is strong, simple, elegant; the legs are well placed and firm; it is supple and comfortable. The rattan is in mingled colors, red predominating. There are rattan wound frames, with the star-woven cane centers, with which Americans are familiar, and there are elaborate frames formed of several small canes, each rattan wound, with centers like lace work. There are bamboo frames and backs, with lacquered panels or painted tiles, and seats of matting. They make also



CHAIRS IN RATTAN. BY PERRET & FILS & VIBERT, PARIS. (Nos. 52 AND 52A.)

very comfortable and pretty chairs of damasked matting, colored in plaids, stretched smoothly over the frame, the seat and back in one piece. Chinese forms are in the market also, very intricately woven, with astonishing outlines, and very hideous, and finally there are the French curved frame designs, very intricate, with wheel and spiral decoration. These are not ugly like the Chinese, and yet they seldom possess as much character as they should. The square forms are best; perhaps the material does not admit of good curves.

It is difficult to say, though, what it will admit of, for the possibilities of rattan for design are not, I think, well understood even in France. A piece of French rattan furniture has many good qualities. It is strong, yet exquisitely supple; it is intricately and elegantly woven; it is doubtless unsurpassed; and yet often in its curves and in the details of its ornament it is childish and puerile, showing that the material is not handled from the height of art. And if the French are not masters of the material—is anybody? There is a field here for the designer who can grasp the subject.

But the French already lacquer and color this material charmingly.

Some bamboo and rattan, and matting tables which I saw at the house mentioned above, should have a special word. They are well proportioned, have solid but elegant legs, and the under framework joining the legs is particularly good in design. One so seldom sees a good table that these are worth remarking. Bamboo seems to lend itself well to table making.

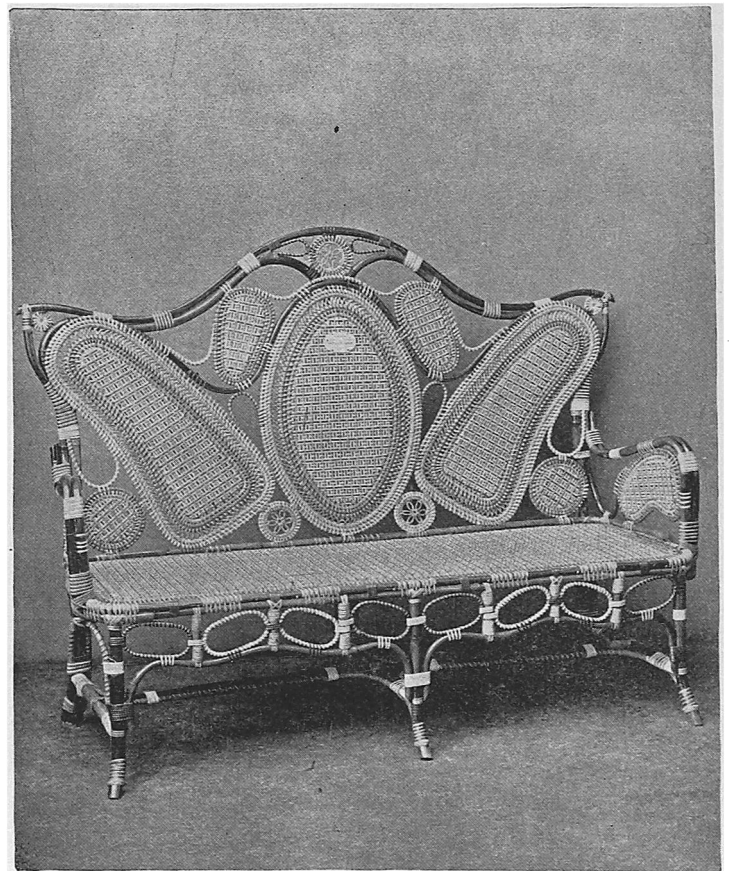
As backgrounds to this sort of furniture, French decorators put on the walls a plain color, such as Chinese pink, or blue or gray, which serves as a ground for Japanese draperies in a harmonizing color, with this scattered flowers and birds, and

dragons and crescent moons. Turkish rugs furnish the floor. Matting carpets, used by the Chinese and Japanese, are hard both in quality and effect. They do not furnish color enough. The Japanese do not know how to make rugs. They have taken up the industry of late, but as yet with little success. Add to these things a bead screen or two, a pot of Japanese lilies, etcetera, etcetera, and you will have a country house interior very much *a la mode*.

Richer furniture for chateau bedrooms is made of Japanese lacquer, with inlays and incrustations of ivory and pearl. These materials come from the East and the pieces are built in Paris. An exquisite bamboo bedroom set, made at the same house, has Japanese lacquered panels with figures in color. With this put a tawny or a blue hanging, with sharply defined black and white stalks and silver rivers, brass fretted Turkish hanging lamps, chairs of black bamboo.

Screens, so long out of fashion, are again in high vogue, and French women amuse themselves with hunting out from old chests and drawers odd pieces of old silk and having frames made to fit them, from which results new forms in screens. By which haphazard means, however, are likely to be discovered no new form of beauty. It is the latest amusement. Japanese lacquered and embroidered screens are in much favor here, but the Japanese gilded leather screens, to which the English are partial, seem to be not to French taste. Cheap Japanese screens are not, as a rule, desirable, as they are apt to be so raw in color that they disorganize the whole color scheme of a room. More desirable are bamboo screens with panels of Zanzibar matting.

A new Parisian design for a wall hanging is of linen brocatelle, greenish-gray in color, on which a white linen design is applied with buttonhole embroidery of pink and white silk floss. The pattern consists of a powdering of wild roses in plan,



SETTEE IN RATTAN. BY PERRET & FILS & VIBERT, PARIS. (No. 124.)

graduated in size, the largest being at the bottom, and extending to nearly half way up the wall. Along the top is appliqued a frieze ornament composed of festooned ribbons tied in knots. These are cut out of cream and rose colored ribbon and are appliqued down, and are interspersed with scattered roses composed entirely of embroidery. The angle of the cornice has a narrow band of rose velvet. The effect is very good, and it is suggested as a background for rattan furniture.